



Town of Wyoming
Special Meeting
Wyoming Municipal Building
July 22, 2019, 6:30 p.m.

CALL TO ORDER – Mayor Rife called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – Mayor Rife

MOMENT OF SILENCE– Mayor Rife

ROLL CALL

Council Attending: Mayor, Dale Rife; Vice-Mayor, Doug Denison; Secretary Jonny Johnson; and Councilperson Carlen Kenley

Council Absent: Treasurer, Kyle Dixon

Staff Attending: Chief of Police, Martin Willey; Lieutenant, Charles Groce; Office Manager, Laura Connor

Public Attending: Seth Greenberg, Joyce Stockslager, Steven Bilbrough, Donna Mason, Elaine Bilow, Ernie Piazza, Mike Marasco, Kathy McGinty, Tracy Torres

Mr. Kenley moved with a second from Mr. Johnson to accept the absence of Kyle Dixon due to being away on vacation. Mayor Rife, Mr. Denison, Mr. Johnson, Mr. Kenley, Aye. None Opposed. Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

- Mr. Bilbrough stated his continued complaints regarding the noise at the church located at 11 W Camden Wyoming Ave. The Conditional Use and enforcement of the Noise Ordinance (2-11) were questioned and discussed. Chief Willey stated that he would need to walk in and cite any person(s) making excessive noise. Mr. Denison requested for the Town's lawyer to be present during the next meeting. Mrs. Connor will check his availability and will keep everyone posted.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Mr. Johnson moved with a second from Mr. Kenley to accept the agenda as published. Mayor Rife, Mr. Johnson, Mr. Kenley, Aye. None Opposed. Mr. Denison not voting. Motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS

Clarification of misunderstanding of status of Police Department

Mayor Rife stated that she would like to clarify the rumor spreading around town. The Town of Wyoming is not shutting down the Police Department and is also not combining police departments with the Town of Camden. She did state that currently there is only eight (8) hours of coverage each day this week. The only officers are the Chief and Lieutenant and the Chief is on vacation this week.

Lieutenant Groce stated that Cali Echeverri (new recruit) will graduate from the academy on August 15th. She will need to complete field training (FTO) and should be on her own by December. Mr. Denison asked if a flex schedule is possible. Copies of current schedule for the police were provided for review. Chief stated that he would change his schedule to be 4 hours on Thursday and 12 hour shifts Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. The Lieutenant would work noon until 10 pm Monday through Thursday. It was questioned on how many applications were received so far for the Police Officer job posting – about 30 have been received and are still being reviewed.

Tracy Torres (Vice-Mayor of Camden) stated that she had no prior knowledge of the meeting that was held with Camden Chief of Police and Mayor Rife. She also stated that Camden is also short-staffed with officers, but they are not hiring due to not having the funds available. It was questioned on who would “backup” if no one is on duty. Chief Willey stated that Delaware State Police has been notified and will respond. Chief Willey stated that the SOPs state that the Chief approves all outside overtime. Lieutenant questioned why the Wyoming Police Department did not get invited to the meeting with Camden. Mr. Johnson clarified the reason for the meeting and stated that the meeting with Camden was an initial discussion to see what options are available. It was stated that salary of the officers is a concern. There was discussion on salary versus total compensation.

Lieutenant stated that the shortage of police officers is a statewide and a nationwide problem that all small towns are experiencing. He also stated that he is planning on retiring in May 2020. Chief Willey stated that the next Delaware State Police Academy and New Castle County Academy both start mid-September. The next academy after those is in the spring.

Mike Marasco stated that police presence and community involvement in town is important. He also questioned if a rotating shift is possible and the salary of entry level officers.

Mr. Denison re-iterated that we are “not” getting rid of the Police Department, but we are under staffed. He is unsure what the future will bring and stated that there is always a need to change. We are taking one step at a time. Mr. Denison asked if everyone was in agreement with the new schedule.

Donna Mason asked if the schedule is seasonal. Lieutenant responded with not really – there is always something going on. She asked what was involved in closing the Park. It was stated that a person of authority (police) goes farther than Code Enforcement and the presence of an officer deters activity.

Seth Greenberg asked if the two (2) extra police cars that are sitting next to the police department can be periodically moved around town to give the illusion of more police presence.

Mayor Rife stated that we all need to communicate better. Mr. Denison questioned if we should have other departments assist in our shortage. Chief Willey asked why pay other departments when you can pay me extra under special duty. Mr. Denison stated that we will discuss overtime at our next meeting.

Council took a break at 8:17 p.m.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mr. Denison moved and was seconded by Mr. Kenley to move into Executive Session at 8:33 p.m. Mayor Rife, Mr. Denison, Mr. Johnson, and Mr. Kenley, Aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

Council returned to regular session at 8:51 p.m.

Mr. Denison moved and was seconded by Mr. Johnson to move from Executive Session back to Regular Session at 8:51 p.m. Mayor Rife, Mr. Denison, Mr. Johnson and Mr. Kenley, Aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

POSSIBLE VOTE ON EXECUTIVE SESSION ISSUES

Mr. Denison moved and seconded by Mr. Johnson to proceed with the recommended actions discussed in Executive Session. Mayor Rife, Mr. Denison, Mr. Johnson and Mr. Kenley, Aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

None

ADJOURN

Mr. Denison moved with a second by Mr. Johnson to adjourn the meeting. Mayor Rife, Mr. Denison, Mr. Dixon, Mr. Johnson, Mr. Kenley, Aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 8:52 p.m.

Laura Connor
Office Manager